

Remarks/Arguments

In the final rejection of September 1, 2004, claims 1 through 13 were cancelled. Claims 14 through 40 were pending. Method claims 14-16 were finally rejected, and method claims 18-20 and 24-26 were objected to. Claims 18 and 24 are cancelled herein.

In the final rejection, claims 17, 21-23 and 27-40 were not elected and were withdrawn from consideration. By this amendment, claim 17 is cancelled, claims 21 – 23 and 27 – 29 are withdrawn, and claims 30 – 40 are cancelled.

In the final rejection, claims 18-20 and 24-26 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In the bottom paragraph of page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner noted that based on the declarations submitted by applicant, it appears that the criticality of the invention lies in the subject matter of claims 18-20 and 24-26. That is, the combination of a depression and a perforation, wherein the perforation is in the form of a slit.

In accordance with the Examiner's note, Applicants have herein amended the finally rejected base claims to include the recitations of the objected to and intervening claims. For example, the recitation of slit width of claim 18 has been incorporated into base claim 14, and claim 18 has been cancelled. Likewise, the recitation of slit width of claim 24 has been incorporated into base claim 16, and claim 24 has been cancelled.

Accordingly, independent claim 14 is allowable and its dependent claims 15, 19 and 20 are allowable with claim 14. Also, independent claim 16 is allowable and its dependent claims 25 and 26 are allowable with claim 16.

Claims 14 and 16 have also been amended for reasons of clarity. By the amendment, these claims recite the claim construction sought by Appellant in the Decision and in the Request for Rehearing. For example, for claim 14, each aperture has only a single centerline, and not, as the Board construed, a plurality of centerlines (Decision on Rehearing, page 4, top paragraph).

Applicants request that the Examiner consider rejoinder of withdrawn method claims 21 – 23 which now depend from base claim 14 (and are allowable with it), and rejoinder of withdrawn method claims 27 – 29 which now depend from base claim 16 (and are allowable with it), since the Examiner indicated in an earlier Requirement for Restriction (Paper No. 4, dated March 22, 2001) that such rejoinder would be considered.

Applicants reserve the right to file one or more continuation applications and/or one or more divisional applications.

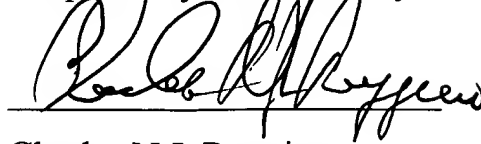
In view of the above amendments and remarks, claims 14, 15, 19, 20 through 23, and claims 16 and 25 through 29 are allowable and an action to

that effect is earnestly solicited.

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Date

Respectfully submitted, by



Charles N.J. Ruggiero,
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 28468
Ohlandt, Greeley, Ruggiero & Perle. L.L.P.
One Landmark Square, 10th Floor
Stamford, CT 06901-2682
Tel.: (203) 327-4500
Fax: (203) 327-6401